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Rheumatoid Arthritis

Experiences with Hydrocortisone (Free Alcohol) and Hydrocortisone Acetate

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SUMMARY

• Recent experimental evidence suggests that hydrocortisone (Kendall's Compound F) is probably the principal glycogenic steroid secreted by the adrenal cortex and that under conditions of stress it may participate more than cortisone in physiologic reactions. Laboratory studies indicate that hydrocortisone has greater physiologic activity, milligram for milligram, than cortisone and with certain assays its potency is twice as great.

Two forms of hydrocortisone, the free alcohol preparation and the acetate, were given systemically to patients with rheumatoid arthritis and were observed to possess significant differences in ability to suppress the disease manifestations.

When administered orally in large initial doses, hydrocortisone (free alcohol) appeared to produce greater suppressive effects, milligram for milligram, than either hydrocortisone acetate or cortisone acetate. Comparisons of potency made by determining maintenance dosage requirements for equivalent degrees of clinical control in the same patients indicated that the effectiveness of hydrocortisone (free alcohol) is more than 50 per cent greater than that of either the free or acetated forms of cortisone and approximately twice as great as that of hydrocortisone acetate.

Certain observations suggested that the greater antirheumatic activity of hydrocortisone (free alcohol) is not accompanied by a correspondingly greater tendency toward en-

docrine complications. If more extensive future investigations support this observation, hydrocortisone (free alcohol), by producing equally efficient results with smaller doses, may prove superior to cortisone as a therapeutic agent.

Intra-articular injections of hydrocortisone acetate appear to have only a limited place in the management of rheumatoid arthritis but may be used for temporary relief under certain conditions. In preliminary studies by the author it was noted that whereas improvement resulted in 80 per cent of the treated joints, the improvement was graded as pronounced or very pronounced in only one-half of the joints so injected. In almost all instances the benefits derived were quite temporary. Results observed in treatment of osteoarthritic joints by this method were decidedly poorer than in rheumatoid arthritis.

IT IS NOW generally conceded that cortisone exerts a beneficial influence in rheumatoid arthritis by suppressing, through some yet unknown mechanism, the inflammatory reactions of the tissues involved. Its effects are not curative and its administration probably does not alter the basic pattern of the disease. The suppressive action usually lasts only for as long as treatment is given, and if improvement is to be sustained cortisone must be administered more or less continuously for an indefinite period. Prolonged

Presented before the Section on General Medicine at the 81st Annual Session of the California Medical Association, Los Angeles, April 27-30, 1952.

California M E D I C I N E

EDITORIAL

A.M.A. Annual Meeting

CHICAGO PROVED its eminence as a host city to the American Medical Association meeting last month, when some 15,000 physicians and a like number of others gathered for the one hundred and first annual A.M.A. session. The big medical meeting of the year was, by all reports, one of the finest in the national organization's history.

On the scientific side, about 400 papers were presented before the fifteen scientific divisions. Attendance, as usual, was to capacity and the papers of extremely high caliber. Enthusiasm in many sections was sharpened by the advance meetings of numerous specialty societies. These, as well as the A.M.A. sessions themselves, drew an outstanding array of science writers from all parts of the country.

For the hundreds of exhibits, both scientific and technical, Chicago's famed Navy Pier was used. Five-eighths of a mile long, this structure literally gleamed with what has been called "a world's fair of medicine." Personnel of the A.M.A. exhibit departments used motor scooters to cover the distances they had to travel to administer the show.

In the House of Delegates, interest was pretty well centered on the controversy which has arisen between the A.M.A. and the Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation appointed by President Truman. Dr. John W. Cline, outgoing A.M.A. president, leveled off at this commission in his farewell address to the House of Delegates and was immediately supported by a resolution pointing out the political motivation for the appointment of the commission. After considerable discussion, pro and con, this resolution was tabled, only to rise again when the original parliamentary procedure was found to have been faulty. Reintroduced in a way that satisfied parliamentary rules, the resolution was assigned to a reference committee where opponents and proponents were given full opportunity to state their views. When the resolution was returned to the House,

altered only by elimination of personalities, it received an overwhelmingly affirmative vote.

Numerous other actions were taken by the House of Delegates, among them the elimination of A.M.A. Fellowships. When the national body began assessing annual membership dues, the coexistence of membership and fellowship caused endless confusion. Now there is only one designation—*member*.

A California resolution adopted by the C.M.A. House of Delegates in April, calling for negotiations looking toward eventual amalgamation of the medical and osteopathic professions, was well received by the House of Delegates. Support was apparent from many states where the licenses of both medical doctors and osteopathic physicians and surgeons are identical and where this fact causes many problems. The A.M.A. governing body referred this proposal to the Board of Trustees, with the suggestion that steps be taken in conjunction with the American Osteopathic Association to review the present situation. One item of importance in this connection was the suggestion that any stigma of unethical conduct be

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California MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

NOTICES & REPORTS

Council Meeting Minutes

Tentative Drafts: Minutes of the 389th, 390th, 391st, 392nd and 393rd Meetings of the Council, Los Angeles, April 26 to 30, 1952.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Shipman in Conference Room 8 of the Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, April 26, 1952.

Roll Call:

Present were President MacLean, President-Elect Alesen, Councilors West, Loos, Sampson, Morrison, Dau, Ray, Montgomery, Lum, Green, Pollock, Frees, Shipman, Varden and Heron; Speaker Charnock and Secretary Daniels. Absent for cause, Councilor Thompson and Editor Wilbur.

A quorum present and acting.

Present by invitation during all or a part of the meeting were Executive Secretary Hunton, Legal Counsel Hassard, Public Relations Director Clancy and associates Pettis and Gillette; County Society executive secretaries Bannister of Orange, Jensen of Fresno, Kihm of San Francisco, Nute of San Diego, Thompson of San Joaquin, Venable of Kern and Wood of San Mateo; Vice-Speaker Randel; Mr. William M. Bowman of California Physicians' Service; Messrs. Clem Whitaker, Jr., and Ned Burman of public relations counsel; Drs. Dwight H. Murray, Francis J. Cox, Donald Cass, Leopold H. Fraser, John R. Upton, Louis Regan, Packard Thurber, Sr., George Maner and Frank A. MacDonald; and Hon. Sam L. Collins, Speaker of the California State Assembly.

1. Minutes for Approval:

(a) On motion duly made and seconded, minutes of the 388th Council meeting, held February 10, 1952, were approved.

(b) On motion duly made and seconded, minutes of the 230th Executive Committee meeting, held March 26, 1952, were approved.

2. Membership:

(a) On motion duly made and seconded, one 1950 member whose 1950 and 1951 dues had been

received since the preceding Council meeting was reinstated to membership.

(b) On motion duly made and seconded, eight (8) 1951 members whose 1951 dues had been received since the preceding Council meeting were reinstated to membership.

(c) On motion duly made and seconded, 532 members whose 1952 dues had been received since April 1, 1952, were reinstated to membership.

(d) On motion duly made and seconded in each instance, nine (9) applicants were voted Associate Membership. These were:

Waldo E. Golden, Mervin J. Goldman, Yoshiye Togosaki, Alameda-Contra Costa; Robert Monlux, William Rice, Virginia Stammer, Fresno County; Robert J. Garbarino, Madera County; Leon L. Gardner, San Diego County; Earl W. Escher, San Francisco.

(e) On motion duly made and seconded in each instance, twelve (12) applicants were granted Retired Membership. These were:

Margaret Sisson, Alameda-Contra Costa; Charles R. Castlen, Arch J. Dickson, Leland Ellis, John Severy Hibben, Samuel D. Ingham, John C. Irwin, Hyman Lischner, Arthur A. McClurkin, Cyrus W.

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